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SUFFERINGS OF THE BATTLE-FIELD.

BY PROF. UPHAM, OF BOWDOIN COLLEGE.

Let us consider, for a moment, the objects which are presented to our notice on the field of battle; let us place ourselves on some conspicuous spot, in the neighborhood of the place of contest, where we may not only distinctly see what is going on, but may be at liberty to indulge those reflections which such a scene and situation are calculated to inspire.

The first thing that arrests our attention, is the sudden discovery of large masses of men rapidly assembling together; and, as we perceive that they bear the same image, and know that they come from the hand of the same Creator, we naturally conclude, on every principle of reason and humanity, that they are assembling for no other than just and amicable purposes. But we soon discover, to our great surprise, that their meeting and salutations, so far from being of a consultative and friendly character, are violent and threatening, and take place with every demonstration of hostility, amid the clash of swords and the bristling of bayonets. But man, even when placed in this lamentable position of crime and cruelty, discovers traits of character which show that he was formed for better things,—great sagacity, promptness in the moment of peril, activity, courage, indomitable perseverance. These traits of character might be applied for great good; but here they are applied, and too dreadfully applied, in accelerating the work of destruction,—to smite down the opposing combatant, to tear open the fountain of life, to roll onward the dreadful wave of war. In a few moments after these vast masses are met together, we hear the clash of swords, the roar of cannon, the

noise and the confusion, the shout of victory, the groans of the wounded and the dying ; but nothing, except some shadowy outlines, is seen. After a while, the smoke rolls slowly away, and, in the light of the glaring and sickly sun, we behold the whole plain covered with human bodies, multitudes of them dead, and others in a state of intense suffering from their wounds ; and, if we undertake to count them, the enumeration only increases that overwhelming sensation which the mere glance had tended to inspire :—on the field of Austerlitz, twenty thousand ; on the field of Bautzen, twenty-five thousand ; at Dresden, thirty thousand ; at Waterloo, forty thousand ; at Eylau, fifty thousand ; at Borodino, eighty thousand.

We do not go back to the dreadful scenes of antiquity ; to the days of the Alexanders, and the Hannibals, and the Cæsars ; to the battle-fields of Cannæ and Philippi. But look merely at what has taken place in our own days, and, as it were, under our own eyes, and, what renders it still more surprising, amid the light of civilization, and under the blaze of the gospel. As we cast our eyes over the field of battle, covered with such a multitude of dead and wounded persons, we cannot but be filled with astonishment and horror, especially when we remember that the combatants are all the dependent and favored children of that great Being who not only made them, but required them to love one another. Certain it is, that the spectator, as he looks upon the field of battle, has emotions of unmingled surprise and consternation ; he feels that a dreadful crime has been committed, the guilt of which rests somewhere ; he is stunned and amazed, and hardly knows what character to attach to man, who can permit himself to be engaged in such transactions ; and yet it cannot be doubted that the effect of the scene which is before him, is lessened by its own dimensions—is diminished by its very vastness. The man who is thinking of the sufferings of forty or fifty thousands, can have no very distinct conceptions of the sufferings of a particular individual in that vast number. If he could take a full and distinct view of the sufferings of each one in that great multitude,—if he could see the tears and the agonies in each particular case, and, by some process of intellectual and sentient arithmetic, could bring them all into one sum, and place them all before the mind at once,—what a vast amount ! what unparalleled wretchedness ! with what torture would it fill the soul ! But this cannot be : the structure of the human mind is such as not to admit of it. And it is for this reason

that we will turn away a moment from the contemplation of the scene in its totality, in its mere general features, for the purpose of seeing it in its parts, its fragments, its particular instances.

CASE OF CAPT. COOKE.—There was a certain Captain Cooke in the British army at the battle of New Orleans, who has given to the public some interesting incidents, which took place under his own eye in that memorable engagement. And it is *incidents*, the facts in which individuals are concerned, the insulated details of a battle, and not the whole, assimilated and contemplated in one broad mass, which are to give us the precisely true conception of the miseries usually endured on such occasions. On the morning of the eighth of January, the officer above referred to, saw three companies of soldiers, about two hundred and forty in number, advancing on the high road to New Orleans, for the purpose of attacking what was called the Crescent Battery. Among other persons, he saw Lieutenant Duncan Campbell, with whom he seems to have been particularly acquainted, and asked him where he was going. The lieutenant replied that he did not know. “Then,” said Captain Cooke, “you have got into what I call a good thing: the far-famed American battery is in front, at a short range; and, on the left, this spot is flanked, at eight hundred yards, by their batteries on the opposite side of the river.” At this piece of information, the lieutenant laughed heartily. Captain Cooke advised him to take off his blue pelisse coat, in order to be like the rest of the men; but he promptly refused, —uttering, at the same time, some expressions of defiance against the Americans,—and, having embraced the captain, went onward. He was a young officer, of twenty years of age, of a fine personal appearance, and had fought in many bloody encounters in France and Spain. But what was the fate which war had reserved for one so young, so interesting in appearance, and towards whom, undoubtedly, the affections of many friends in a distant land were fondly directed? “Near the close of the battle, Lieutenant Duncan Campbell,” says the writer, “was seen, to our left, running about in circles, first staggering one way, then another, and at length he fell on the sod, helplessly, upon his face, and again tumbled; and when he was picked up, he was found to be blind, from the effects of grape shot, that had torn open his forehead, given him a slight wound in the leg, and had also ripped the scabbard from his side, and knocked the cap from his head. While

being borne insensible to the rear, he still clinched the hilt of his sword with a convulsive grasp, the blade thereof being broken off, close at the hilt, with grape shot; and in a state of delirium and suffering, he lived for a few days." Here is an incident which may be called a common one: he died much as any other soldier on the field of battle may be supposed to die. But this is the cause of the difference in our feelings; we single him out from the rest of the multitude; we do not mingle, and confound, and lose sight of his suffering in the vague and indefinite idea of suffering in the mass; and while we are too often unmoved, in consequence of our inability to combine a particular and a general view, by the general statement of thousands having suffered, we at once exclaim, when our eye is fixed on a single case, like the one before us, "What a shocking death is this! What barbarity there is in war! What insanity in men, that they should butcher and tear to pieces one another!"

"For five hours," continues the narrative of this officer, "the enemy plied us with grape and round shot. Some of the wounded, lying in the mud, or on the wet grass, managed to crawl away; but, every now and then, some unfortunate man was lifted off the ground by round shot, and lay killed or mangled. During the tedious hours we remained in front, it was necessary to lie on the ground, to cover ourselves from the projectiles. An officer of our regiment was in a reclining posture, when grape shot passed through both his knees: at first, he sunk back faintly; but, at length, opening his eyes and looking at his wounds, he said, 'Carry me away; I am *chilled to death*.' And, as he was hoisted on men's shoulders, more round and grape shot passed his head. Taking off his cap, he waved it; and, after many narrow escapes, got out of range, suffered amputation of both legs; but died of his wounds on board ship, after enduring all the pain of the surgical operation and passing down the lake in an open boat."

A SCENE AFTER THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR.—There was an individual present at the naval battle of Trafalgar, who relates some things that came under his personal notice. From the account, abridged and prepared for the second volume of the *Harbinger of Peace*, we make the following extract:—"Now that the conflict was over, our kindred feelings resumed their sway. Eager inquiries were expressed, and earnest congratulations exchanged at this moment. The officers came to make their report to the captain; and the fatal result cast a

gloom over the scene of our triumph. I have alluded to the impressions of our first lieutenant, that he should not survive the contest. This gallant officer was severely wounded in the thigh, and underwent amputation; but his prediction was realized, for he expired before the action had ceased. The junior lieutenant was also mortally wounded, on the quarter-deck. These gallant fellows were lying beside each other, in the gun-room, preparatory to their being committed to the deep; and here many met to take a last look of our departed friends, whose remains soon floated in the promiscuous multitude, without distinction either of rank or nation. In the act of launching a poor sailor over the poop, he was discovered to breathe; and, after being a week in the hospital, the ball, which entered the temple, came out of his mouth. I notice this occurrence, to show the probability that many are thrown overboard when life is not extinct. The upper deck presented a confused and dreadful appearance: masts, yards, sails, ropes, and fragments of wreck, were scattered in every direction; nothing could be more horrible than the scene of blood and mangled remains with which every part was covered, and which, from the quantity of splinters, resembled a shipwright's yard strewn with gore.

"From our extensive loss,—thirty-four killed, and ninety-six wounded,—our cockpit exhibited a scene of suffering and carnage which rarely occurs. I visited this abode of suffering, with the natural impulse which led many others thither, namely, to ascertain the fate of a friend or companion. So many bodies in such a confined place, and under such distressing circumstances, would affect the most obdurate heart. My nerves were but little accustomed to such trials; but even the dangers of the battle did not seem more terrific than the spectacle before me. On a long table lay several, anxiously looking for their turn to receive the surgeon's care, yet dreading the fate which he might pronounce. One subject was undergoing amputation; and every part was heaped with sufferers. Their piercing shrieks and expiring groans were echoed through this vault of misery; and, even at this distant period, the heart-sickening picture is alive in my memory."

HOW TO GET AT THE REAL EVILS OF WAR.—History, as it is generally written, is nothing but an outline, a skeleton, a mere *anatomy*; and it gives us scarcely a more perfect idea of the events it undertakes to describe, than the human skeleton does of the symmetry and beauty of the human form. If we

wish to go beneath the surface, if we wish to know things as they are, we must look into what are sometimes called the *documents* of history—private letters, biographical notices, personal memoirs, and incidents, which aspire to no higher honor than that of being chronicled in a newspaper. A person may read Voltaire's History of Louis XIV, and yet have but a very feeble conception of the miseries of war; but not so when he reads the Memoirs of Madame de la Rochejaquelein. The one deals in outlines,—it leaves merely a general, and therefore a feeble impression; the other, limited to a single event, gives its minute facts, and we see it distinctly and graphically just as it was,—and, what is more, we *feel* it. We could give passages from this little book; but if we made a beginning, we should not know where to end; and we merely mark it down as a document to be referred to, in all times to come, in proof of the inexpressible miseries which men are bringing upon themselves by resorting to arms.

ALL WAR CONTRARY TO THE GOSPEL.

A RECENT TESTIMONY OF THE FRIENDS IN ENGLAND AGAINST WAR.

We regard the Quakers as the first effective pioneers among modern Christians in the cause of peace; and, however superfluous it may appear to some, we rejoice to find them renewing their testimony before the world against this unchristian practice. An unknown friend has sent us a copy of the testimony issued last year by the Friends in England on this subject; and a document so brief, so clear and pertinent, so beautiful in its style, so conciliatory in its spirit, and so well adapted to the times, we cannot refrain from copying almost entire.

From the earliest period of the history of our religious Society, we have maintained the principle, that all wars and fightings are wholly inconsistent with the gospel dispensation; and we think it right at the present time to set forth the scriptural grounds of this principle.

We have ever accepted the Holy Scriptures as of divine authority, and being taught therein to honor the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lawgiver and our king, we have felt it to be an